



TENNESSEE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
5TH FLOOR ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0380

Memorandum

To: Directors of Schools
Special Education Supervisors/Directors

From: Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner

Date: May 24, 2002

Re: Paraprofessional Training

Many of you are aware that the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act)** enacted on January 8, 2002, has implications for special education programs. This memo is one of many that will attempt to explain how this new act will effect special education programs. Employment standards for paraprofessionals require a higher level of education as explained below.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "all paraprofessionals hired after January 8 must have (1) completed two years of study an institution of higher education, (2) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree, or (3) met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness)."

These requirements apply to paraprofessionals with instructional duties in any program supported by Title I funds. For a schoolwide school, this means all paraprofessionals with instructional duties without regard to the source of funding of the positions. This includes special education paraprofessionals currently employed in Title I schoolwide schools.

The above requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and non-instructional computer assistance are not considered paraprofessionals for Title I purposes.

Please note that this new requirement only pertains to staff employed after January 8, 2002. Current staff employed in your school district may continue working in their present positions although they must meet the above requirement by January 8, 2006. Additionally, Title I and Title II funds may be used for ongoing training and professional development to help paraprofessionals meet the statutory requirements. As we receive further guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, we will forward it to you as soon as possible.

cc: District Directors
Special Education Staff